



Reining in Murder

Leigh Hearon

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"Here's a new heroine after my own heart. Plan to stay up all night with this one." -- Fern Michaels, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author

When horse trainer Annie Carson rescues a beautiful thoroughbred from a roadside rollover, she knows the horse is lucky to be alive...unlike the driver. After rehabilitating the injured animal at her Carson Stables ranch, Annie delivers the horse to Hilda Colbert--the thoroughbred's neurotic and controlling owner--only to find she's been permanently put out to pasture. Two deaths in three days is unheard of in the small Olympic Peninsula county, and Annie decides to start sniffing around. She's confident she can track down a killer...but she may not know how ruthless this killer really is...

Reining in Murder Details

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Author : Leigh Hearon

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From Reader Review Reining in Murder for online ebook

Cheryl says

I won this book on Goodreads. Annie Carson is a horse trainer, she is called in the middle of the night to rescue a horse in a trailer rollover. She rehabilitates the horse and tries to return the horse to the neurotic owner. She finds the owner dead and tries to find out who the killer is. Lots of information on training horses. It also has the typical horses in a barn fire scene.

Lola says

I received a copy in exchange for an honest review

I started this book after DNF'ing a sci-fi book that was too gruesome and dark for me, so a nice cozy mystery seemed like it would be the perfect book to read after that. The start of this book was good. Main character Annie cared about animals and the book starts with a mysterious death and she helps rescue the horse that was in the accident. The first chapter was great and I am not exactly sure when I started losing interest, but this book just fell flat for me.

Interesting premise and a cozy mystery focused on animals in this case horses. It sounded like this would've been a good one. And I can't really point out why this one didn't work for me. Eventually it just started boring me, little things started annoying me and I just got bored. I also didn't want to put it down, I guess I wanted to know who was the killer. And at the end I am not sure it was really worth it to keep reading. I did like the focus on the horses and it was obvious the author knew what she was talking about.

The mystery wasn't really a mystery or a big part of the book. the set-up was intriguing and from there it went downhill for me. The police people seemed like nice people with how the sheriff was one of the main character their friends, which was original. Then the police started making really dumb conclusions, not investigating leads and making conclusions based on what? Their own theories? There were some conclusion that really didn't make sense, there was no proof, but everyone was convinced this was what had happened.

There was no mystery, no intrigue and it felt like there was too little focus on the mystery and more on the day to day life of the main characters. And as I didn't quite care about the characters it didn't work for me. Then the main character keep evidence back and instead of actively doing something with it, it just delays the investigation and doesn't add anything. Only at 70% the main character actively started helping the investigation and half accidentally half on purpose she uncovered all the things the police missed. It wasn't really a big surprise who was the killer and by that point I simply had lost interest. Then there is another chapter spent wrapping things up, what they didn't figure out themselves get explained there, which was a lot of holes and I had preferred they figured out more during the investigation. Then an epilogue with a hint of something that might carry over in the next book.

Another issue I have with this book was main character Annie. At first I think I would easily like her with how she cares about her animals, but in the end I just couldn't relate to her. I didn't think she was a likeable character. Eventually another character arrives, Lavender was one of the most annoying characters I had encountered. So she wasn't exactly easy to get along with, but the way Annie treated her wasn't really nice either. There were just certain scenes where I didn't quite like Annie her voice. And why did her love for

meat even had to make it in the book? Also how did she make a living? We never hear how she makes money.

There is a tiny hint towards something that could be a romance, but it doesn't really get much attention. There was an instant connection and with how short they knew each other it seemed their feelings were really strong even though they didn't really spend that much time together. It just left me feeling meh and then with what happened later in the book we don't see a lot of the romance. And I would've liked to get more resolution about a plot line involving the love interest at the end of the book as I don't plan on reading the next book.

To summarize: this one has a promising start and premise, but it just fell flat for me. I liked Annie and her love for animals, I could relate to that. I liked how the horses aspect was handled and the focus on these animals. The mystery didn't quite work for me, there wasn't as much focus on the mystery as I had hoped, the police made conclusions based on theories instead of evidence. The main character only got actively involved at the end and even then half of the mystery got solved by coincidence it seemed. I wasn't too surprised when we found out who was the killer, but there wasn't a nice set-up towards it either. There were a lot of little things that annoyed me and I just lost interest eventually. I didn't really care about the characters and I thought the main character wasn't really likeable. There is a hint of romance, but it seemed to go too fast and then almost no progress after that. Overall this had some promise and I liked the horse aspect, but the rest fell flat for me.

Alycia says

Book could have used a better editor! It's ridiculous, but one of the things that sticks out the most is a puppy which kept switching gender (example: "Annie scooped him up and hugged her."). Not a bad story, but it wasn't that great either. The villain was pretty one-dimensional. The love-interest subplot was baffling, and not in a good way. I found it jarring how some characters swung back and forth between being chummy with the main character and sniping at her like middle-school girls.

I'd probably pick up the next book if I see it in the library but certainly won't go looking for it (or pay any money for it).

SHERRY says

I liked this book very much. A mystery with animal rescue. Two of my favorites in one. I'm now reading the second book in the series, Saddle up for Murder.

Michelle says

Stumbled onto this via some detective work (read: nosiness) of my own, but glad I picked it up. Being a fairly new transplant to the Pacific Northwest, I found the details of the Olympic Peninsula setting very interesting and relatable. The horse stuff was really fun, too. Ironically, I grew up in horse country, but never got involved. They are beautiful animals, but I've always been a little intimidated. Reading this book had me kind of regretting not overcoming my fears. The writing flows naturally, and I liked the characters. Funny

thing about the mystery, itself...I knew who the "bad guy" was, immediately, but it didn't matter. The plotting was set up so nicely, and there were enough believable red herrings thrown at me, that I could allow for room to question my initial guess, and that kept me engaged. Totally unexpected twist at the very end has me ready to find her second book in the series even sooner, though I would've picked it up, anyway. This is somewhere between a cozy mystery, and a regular one. Fans of either designation should enjoy it. :-)

Cathy Cole says

Reining in Murder raised some decidedly mixed emotions in me as I read. Leigh Hearon has created a good, solid mystery, and all the scenes concerning horses and dogs are excellent. The author also created a very intriguing pairing of characters with the elderly Martha and Annie's irritating sister Lavender. These are all good bits that I really appreciated.

However, I think your enjoyment of the book is going to hinge on your perception of the main character, Annie Carson. Mine certainly did. Annie is 43 years old, but her emotional behavior makes her appear much, much younger. She gets on her high horse a lot over others' behavior towards her or their tones of voice. She also does something that drives me nuts: she sits on evidence. She finds vital clues and then does nothing with them. Eventually she has a guilty moment and calls the sheriff to tell him what she's found, but if the sheriff doesn't use the right tone of voice, or if he's not sweet as sugar to her, she gets huffy and the phone call turns into a hangup.

One of the main reasons why Annie gets involved in the investigation is because she gets a good look at the handsome husband of the dead woman, becomes starry-eyed, and decides he's being unjustly accused. More teenage behavior, and I found this all a bit difficult to accept from a woman in her forties. Fortunately Annie begins to snap out of it in the last third of the book, and that saved this entire review.

Hearon has written a good mystery that animal lovers should enjoy a great deal. Hopefully Annie Carson will have an even higher emotional IQ in the next book in the series.

Hilary says

Annie is a horse trainer, and the local horse rescue contact, so when a horse trailer is involved in a fatal accident, she's called to the scene to help, but once she gets the bay thoroughbred home strange things start happening, and before long she's embroiled in a murder investigation (and harboring a material witness).

This isn't your average cozy mystery. Most tend to be on the lighter side, but this definitely has some depth to it, and Annie does not deliberately obstruct or bypass the official investigation. Her relationship with her sister was entertaining in a wry sort of way, her horse and dog training tactics were interesting, and I felt much more connected with the characters and location as a whole.

Disclaimer: I received a free copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Mary Brown says

Synopsis:

"Here's a new heroine after my own heart. Plan to stay up all night with this one." -- Fern Michaels, #1 New York Times bestselling author

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Review:

Annie Carson is part of a search and rescue team for large animals. She helps save them and rehabilitate them. When she is called out to help a horse after being involved in an accident while being transported, she is surprised to hear that the man hauling the horse is dead. She is even more surprised to find the horse's owner dead when she goes to return the horse. Murders do not happen in her community, and two in such a short time is unbelievable. Whether she wants to be or not, she is involved in this horror and knows she has to help figure out who the killer is. But can she do it before the time, and her life, are over?

The characters are well developed, well rounded and three dimensional. I really enjoyed reading about how much Annie loved animals, especially her horses, donkey and dog. She seems to be more of animal person than a people person, which I can relate to. She is a hard worker and takes her job as a horse trainer very seriously. I enjoyed the bickering and banter between her and Dan, the local sheriff, and her friend. They did not always see eye to eye about things, but each knew the other had their backs. I thought Annie's sister, Lavender, was quirky and strange and I loved that. I enjoyed reading the interaction between the two. I also enjoyed all the secondary characters and felt they added a lot to the story.

The mystery is carried on well throughout the entire book. There were enough suspects, clues, twists and turns that I could not pinpoint the killer until it was revealed at the end. I like when that happens. There was a lot of tension and suspense and I was pulled into the book right from the beginning. I wanted to keep swiping pages as fast as I could to see what would happen next.

The writing style flows smoothly and the book is an easy read. The author is very talented in her descriptive writing and much of the time I felt like I was right there, watching all the action taking place and hearing the horses neighing.

Since I know nothing about horses, sometimes I felt a little lost when it came to some of the terminology used when describing actions that Annie was performing. I would have enjoyed a glossary at the beginning or back of the book so I could have learned what some of the terms meant. That is only my opinion and others may not agree with me.

One thing that I found a bit unbelievable is how fast Annie fell for one of the murder suspects. It seemed that as soon as she saw this particular person, she was smitten. That just seemed much too quickly for me and took away some of the credibility for me. Again, this is only my opinion and other readers may not agree

with me.

Overall, I really enjoyed this book and I am looking forward to reading the next one in the series. I thought the mystery was expertly plotted and the tension was almost palpable in places. I would definitely recommend this book to other readers.

Jeanie Jackson says

I love Reining in Murder as much as I hoped I would. I have been wanting to read it since I first heard about it. I loved the balance of day to day and mystery and spending time with her friends. I wonder if someone is going to develop a crush on her. The mystery was strong and while not what I would have expected for the resolution, completely reasonable. This is one of the few times in a long time that I missed the same clue everyone else missed. I did not light the fact that she took evidence twice and not for a very good reason; however, that is much less than in many books and I really enjoyed almost everything else. I wasn't always comfortable with the way she treated her half sister but boy did I understand it!!! Looking forward to the next book

Sandy says

It was nice reading a book with a main character who had some common sense.

Jessica Robbins says

For complete review check out my blog at <https://booksaplentybookreviews.blogs...>

Carol Lynn says

Good adult - NOT x-rated - horses and mystery

#2 downliaded and ready to read ...keep writing, Leigh!

Not feeling wordy tonight.....how much more do I have to write....

Jay says

The first book in the Carson Stables mystery series by Leigh Hearon, Reining In Murder, introduces readers to Annie Carson. She's the owner of a small farm and an assortment of horses and other animals. She's also the area horse rescue leader, so anytime there's a need for someone to help with a horse, she gets a call.

Such a call comes in early one morning. There's a traffic accident involving a thoroughbred in a trailer that overturned on the highway. The driver is dead and when it is determined he was murdered, the police begin investigating while Annie cares for the horse.

Problems further arise when the owner of the horse, a prickly and overly bossy woman named Hilda starts making demands on Annie for the return of the horse. But when Annie tries to bring said horse to Colbert's stables, she stumbles upon Hilda, quite obviously having been murdered.

Despite Annie's at an arms length dealing with most people, her natural curiosity and knowledge of horses make her a bit nosy to find out what happened. Who could have possibly killed Hilda, when it seems that everyone she knew would've liked to have seen her dead.

The police don't have a clue but settle on a suspect, one that Annie doesn't believe did it. How will she find the right killer, clear the falsely accused and keep herself alive in the process?

The author does a nice job of giving a new character life in this book. I did think perhaps Annie was a bit too standoffish for my tastes, but at the same time I loved how the relationship she has with her animals is detailed nicely. I'm not really a horse lover, but reading the narrative about how she goes about caring from them from before dawn until after dark and every minute in between was a bit fascinating.

Populating the supporting cast with instantly memorable characters is always a tough job but there are few here that made their mark. A couple of the cops seem to have a good solid hold in my memory in particular. There's a sister who pretty much makes you want to scream, but there are signs that she'll be made more palatable as the series goes on. Which is a good thing considering how much she seems superfluous in the first book.

I took a chance on reading the book after seeing a review of it in Mystery Scene magazine. I'm happy that I did. It was a pretty good read and I hope to get my hands on Book 2 which is already out on store shelves.

Kristina says

Reining in Murder by Leigh Hearon is the first book in A Carson Stables Mystery series. Annie Carson is a horse rescuer in Suwana County, Washington. She receives a call during the night from Sheriff Dan Stetson. A man was in an accident and he was hauling a horse. The horse needs to be brought back to Carson Farm. The man who was driving, Wayne Johnston did not survive. The horse was okay and only suffered minor injuries. Unfortunately, the gorgeous horse belongs to Hilda Colbert of Colbert Farm. Hilda has a nasty personality. Hilda contacts Annie after she has been up all night caring for her horse, demanding that the horse be transported to her farm immediately (indicating that her farm is far superior). When Annie insists that the horse cannot be moved yet, Hilda states that they will pick up the horse first thing the next day. The next day no one shows or calls. When Annie goes over to Colbert Farm, she finds Hilda dead in her bedroom. The suspect list is long. Sheriff Stetson's number one suspect is Marcus Carson, the deceased husband. Annie is not so sure. Annie starts investigating (while keeping Dan filled in—sort of) and then Marcus disappears. Annie is sure that foul play is involved, but Dan feels that Marcus took off. Then one of the Colbert Farm ranch hands is missing. People are dropping like flies. What is going on? Not only is Annie investigating Hilda's murder, but her half-sister Lavender has decided to visit (they have never met). Lavender is a quirky individual who believes that she has psychic powers (Lavender was spoiled by her

parents). Life is never dull at the Carson Farm.

Reining in Murder is an easy to read cozy mystery novel. I just wish more of the book had been devoted to the mystery. The clues are very sparse (more show up just before the killer is revealed). More time is devoted to Lavender and her antics than to the mystery. We also get quite a bit of information about horses, mules, dogs, Annie's eating habits, Sheriff Stetson's marriage troubles, and the type of scotch Annie (and Dan Stetson) likes to drink. I give Reining in Murder 3 out of 5 stars. I wish the mystery had been harder to figure out. You would think there would be a lot of suspects (since Hilda was not liked by anyone but her husband), but, in reality, there are few of them provided in the book. As soon as Annie found the body, I knew who killed her (you know who is going to be killed as soon as she is mentioned in the book). I did like the main characters and the gorgeous setting. I will read the next book in the series.

I received a complimentary copy of Reining in Murder from NetGalley (and the publisher) in exchange for an honest evaluation of the novel.

Mary Tucker says

this is one of the best mysteries i have ever read. i saw ratings from 1-4 stars when the books that this author has written should be 5 stars hands down.
